

April 28, 2008

TO: Gary Hill, Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE)

FROM: Teresa Parsons  
Director's Review Program Supervisor

SUBJECT: Beverly Niles v. Seattle Central Community College  
Allocation Review Request ALLO-07-033

On February 20, 2008, I conducted a Director's review meeting by telephone conference call, concerning the allocation of Beverly Niles' position. Present at the Director's review meeting were you, Ms. Niles, and her supervisor, Gail Keefe, Manager of Student Services; as well as Human Resources Administrator Kathryn Woodley, representing Seattle Central Community College (SCCC).

### **Background**

In August 2006, Ms. Niles completed a Position Review Request (PRR) asking that her Program Coordinator position be reallocated to the Program Support Supervisor II classification. Ms. Niles and her supervisor, Gail Keefe, Manager of Student Services, signed the request on July 20, 2006. Executive Dean Norward Brooks signed the request on August 3, 2006. Subsequent to completing the PRR, Ms. Niles completed a Seattle Community Colleges Position Questionnaire (PQ), which she signed on November 15, 2006, and her supervisor and the Executive Dean signed in early December 2006.

On March 27, 2007, Human Resources Administrator Kathryn Woodley denied Ms. Niles' reallocation request. Ms. Woodley concluded that the majority of Ms. Niles' assigned work involved coordination tasks, such as processing transcripts and grades, as well as troubleshooting registration problems. Ms. Woodley further concluded that Ms. Niles' position had not been assigned supervisory responsibilities.

On April 18, 2007, the Department of Personnel received Ms. Niles' request for a Director's review of SCCC's allocation determination.

### **Summary of Ms. Niles' Perspective**

Ms. Niles asserts her position is responsible for organizing, coordinating, and supervising the activities of the Records Center and support staff, which include all functions related to student registration. Ms. Niles states that she works collaboratively with other division offices, such as enrollment and student development, and that she serves as a liaison between staff, keeping staff informed about enrollment issues, trends, goals and objectives. Ms. Niles contends that she establishes work priorities, ensures deadlines are met, and provides technical assistance and training on the Student Management System (SMS). Ms. Niles asserts that her supervisor heavily relies on her to provide input on staff issues, budget issues, and the daily operation of the program. Ms. Niles contends that prior incumbents in her position served in exempt status, and she asserts her supervisor supports her reallocation. Ms. Niles believes the Program Support Supervisor II is the appropriate classification for her position.

### **Summary of SCCC's Reasoning**

SCCC acknowledges that Ms. Niles has a great deal of responsibility coordinating the various aspects of registration and acknowledges that she performs her duties very well. However, SCCC contends Ms. Niles' position has not been assigned supervisory responsibility, as indicated by the definition of a supervisor, which includes conducting evaluations and developing performance expectations, as well as hiring and handling disciplinary actions of classified employees. SCCC contends the duties and responsibilities related to supervision reside with Ms. Niles' supervisor, the manager of Student Services. Additionally, SCCC points out that at the time previous incumbents held exempt positions with some of the registration duties, the Student Services Manager position did not exist. SCCC asserts the duties and responsibilities assigned to Ms. Niles' position fit within the Program Coordinator classification.

### **Director's Determination**

This position review was based on the work performed for the six-month period prior to August 2006, when Ms. Niles submitted her request for reallocation. During the Director's review meeting, you explained that Ms. Niles first completed the Position Review request form, which she, her supervisor, and the Dean of Student Services all signed in late July/early August 2006. Ms. Niles then completed Seattle Community Colleges' Position Questionnaire Form for work performed during the same timeframe, also signed by the individuals listed above. Ms. Woodley indicated she received both requests after the college's position questionnaire had been completed.

As the Director's designee, I carefully considered all of the documentation in the file, the exhibits presented during the Director's review meeting, and the verbal comments provided by both parties. Based on my review and analysis of Ms. Niles' assigned duties

and responsibilities, I conclude her position is properly allocated to the Program Coordinator classification.

### **Rationale for Determination**

The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. See Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

On the PRR, Ms. Niles' position purpose has been described as supervising and coordinating the operations of the Registration Department (at the Seattle Vocational Institute), including admission requirements, registration and all aspects of the student records management. Similarly, the PQ indicates that a majority of Ms. Niles' duties include responsibility for ensuring a fast and smooth registration process, serving as a liaison with regard to registration/admission matters, and troubleshooting registration discrepancies for students, staff, and faculty. Specifically, Ms. Niles' assigned duties include the following:

- Ordering quarterly, monthly, weekly and daily student schedules and enrollment related reports;
- Ensuring student records are coded correctly, including completion codes, necessary for completion certificates or graduation, as well as status of grades, attendance, or tuition payments needed for programs such as financial aid;
- Processing official and unofficial transcripts and evaluating transcripts related to graduation requirements;
- Monitoring enrollment and attendance reports and reporting all dropped students with financial aid in compliance with Return to Title Four guidelines and participating in state and federal audits;
- Giving bills to students and dropping students for lack of payment;
- Troubleshooting registration discrepancies for students, staff, and faculty, and serving as the college's liaison with regard to registration and admission matters with Seattle Jobs Initiative, outside agencies, and Career Link;
- Providing technical assistance and training to college staff in the Student Management System (SMS).

During the Director's review conference, we discussed Ms. Niles' role in supervising and directing the work of others in the Registration Department. The PRR (page three) indicates that Ms. Niles supervises an Office Assistant III position and leads a Testing Assistant (temporary) position. However, the same document also indicates that those

two individuals report to Ms. Niles' supervisor, Ms. Keefe, the manager of Student Services. Ms. Keefe clarified that Ms. Niles "supervises" the work of these individuals on a daily basis, has crucial conversations if needed, and provides input to Ms. Keefe as far as performance or issues that arise. Ms. Keefe, however, is the official supervisor of these individuals and has the responsibility for signing evaluations and leave slips or initiating corrective action (for permanent employees).

The Washington State Classification and Pay Administrative Guide defines supervisor as follows:

An employee assigned responsibility by management to participate in all of the following functions with respect to their subordinate employees: (1) selection of staff, (2) training and development, (3) planning and assignment of work, (4) evaluating performance, (5) adjusting grievances, and (6) taking corrective action.

Although Ms. Niles may direct and lead the work of others in the Registration Program, she has not been assigned supervisory responsibilities, as envisioned by the definition of a supervisor.

The basic function for the Program Support Supervisor II classification reads as follows:

Supervise program support staff involved in the performance of duties associated with a highly specialized or technical program(s) and assist in the development of program policies and budgets. Act as liaison between the program and outside organizations.

The distinguishing characteristics of the Program Support Supervisor II include the following:

With delegated authority, interview and recommend selection of applicants, train new employees, assign and schedule work, act upon leave requests, conduct annual performance evaluations and recommend disciplinary action.

Under general direction, perform work using knowledge and experience specific to the program. Assist in planning, implementing, and evaluating policies; devise and implement new procedures; develop information to support budgetary requests and project income and expenditures.

Ms. Keefe is the official supervisor for the employees listed by Ms. Niles on the PRR and PQ. Because Ms. Niles' position has not been delegated supervisory authority, as indicated by the definition of a supervisor, her assigned duties and responsibilities do not meet the basic function and distinguishing characteristics of the Program Support

Supervisor II classification. Although I considered the Program Support Supervisor I classification, it also requires the duty of supervision consistent with the definition of a supervisor.

The basic function for the Program Coordinator classification states that positions “[c]oordinate the operation of a specialized or technical program.” The Washington State Glossary of Classification Terms defines coordinate as independently organizing, monitoring, evaluating, and making adjustments for a program or activity without supervisory responsibility over program or activity participants.

The distinguishing characteristics of a Program Coordinator include the following:

Under general direction, perform work using knowledge and experience specific to the program. Exercise independent judgment in interpreting and applying rules and regulations. Independently advise students, staff, program participants and/or the public regarding program content, policies, procedures and activities; select/recommend alternative courses of action and either:

- Project, monitor, maintain, initiate and/or approve expenditures on program budgets

OR

- Have extensive involvement with students, staff, the public and/or agencies in carrying out program activities, and coordinate, schedule and monitor program activities to determine consistency with program goals.

While examples of work do not form the basis for an allocation, they lend support to the work envisioned within a classification. The typical work examples of the Program Coordinator classification most in line with Ms. Niles’ assigned duties include the following:

Within the specialized program:

- Monitor budget status in line with program activities;
- Provide information and advice to students, staff, program participants and/or the public regarding program content, policies and activities, recommend alternative courses of action; promote the program on campus with outside organizations;
- Attend meetings and/or conferences as program representative;

- Confer regularly with representatives of off-campus organizations and agencies regarding the interpretation and implementation of program and institutional policies;
- Monitor program activities in relation to established program goals; within established program parameters, determine variance from program standards;
- Direct the work of others;
- May make public presentations related to program specialty.

While it is clear Ms. Niles is very knowledgeable about all aspects of the Registration Program and performs her duties well, a position's allocation is not an evaluation of an individual's performance or ability to perform higher-level duties. Rather, an allocation is based on the assigned duties and responsibilities to the position. Based on the overall assignment of work to Ms. Niles' position, the Program Coordinator classification best describes her position.

### **Appeal Rights**

RCW 41.06.170 governs the right to appeal. RCW 41.06.170(4) provides, in relevant part, the following:

An employee incumbent in a position at the time of its allocation or reallocation, or the agency utilizing the position, may appeal the allocation or reallocation to . . . the Washington personnel resources board . . . . Notice of such appeal must be filed in writing within thirty days of the action from which appeal is taken.

The address for the Personnel Resources Board is 2828 Capitol Blvd., P.O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington, 98504-0911.

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

c:     Beverly Niles  
       Kathryn Woodley, SCCC  
       Lisa Skriletz, DOP

Enclosure: List of Exhibits